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PREVENTION OF MENTAL DISEASES.

PHYSICIANS have always agreed that it is easier to prevent than to heal disease. This axiom finds constant confirmation, especially since hygiene has been tested by the experimental method, and since bacteriology has become one of the principal auxiliaries of medical methods with contagious and infectious diseases. States have become occupied with these questions because they have become urgent, and this interference increases as the field of action becomes more vast. If the physicians confirm this axiom in respect to mental maladies, we are not able to say as much for the states, which, for the most part, stand still with folded hands before the ever-rising tide of mental alienation. If we except the Scandinavian countries, we may affirm that the states which see the progressive extension of human degeneration by the multiplication of causes which tend to develop mental diseases react in too tardy a manner against the terrible evil; and that the measures taken against this arrest of development make themselves felt only in an inadequate degree. It is evident that physicians are helpless in this struggle, unless the state comes to their aid.

HEREDITY.

In studying the causes of mental diseases, and, therefore, of human degeneration, we must mention in the first place heredity. We inherit many diseases from our parents and forefathers, and, too often, we transmit them to our posterity. All, then, who are able to follow the course of men from the cradle, who observe the manner in which they receive their education, their conduct at school, their entrance into the world, can follow the painful plague of heredity, as they are likewise able to observe, within certain limits, its development. It is a great error to appeal to the alienist only when the evil has been fully revealed. It is important that every physician be constantly familiar with

the hereditary traits presented by the families intrusted to his care; but it is still more important that men should be taught to know themselves, to know especially the defective factors of their nature, and particularly those which tend to cause decay of their mental faculties and may be transmitted to their offspring. But these principles will remain unknown, or without practical effects, so long as the states do not take to heart the cause of improving their inhabitants, and do not employ radical measures to extirpate all which works toward the intellectual and moral degradation of the people. It is in combating the hereditary forces that the states are to attain the solution of the greater part of the problem which weighs upon them. Very often, in fact, if observation is inadequate, one is inclined to reduce the causes of mental troubles to physical diseases, cerebral disturbances, advanced age, etc. But when we penetrate the life of the insane or degenerate more deeply by retracing the line of descent, we receive new light. Thus we may come to learn the constitution and temperament of the parents, and if this examination of the children is accurately made, we can make a prognosis and suggest preventive measures. In the same way we can make known to parents the directions which should be followed by teachers and physicians. In fact, only too often the parents refuse to believe that there is any hereditary defect in them, and in such cases it is much better to ameliorate their offspring without their knowledge.

It is not merely when the parents or grandparents have been afflicted with a mental disease that we have heredity. Other nervous diseases, as chorea, hysteria, epilepsy, hypochondria, neurasthenia, or even merely a nervous state more or less pronounced, may introduce a diminished resistance in the cerebral forces and disturb these at the least occasion of injury which may be encountered later in the course of life. The maladies which attack the organism profoundly have generally for cause the debilitation of the nervous system, and this debilitation increases in the offspring if both parents have any serious defect. Pulmonary tuberculosis, gout, cancer, scrofula, or a nervous affection with one of the parents, predisposes to mental

alienation; and this predisposition is at least doubled when both parents are affected by one or more of these diseases.

There is a distinction to be noted in the problem of heredity which is not always sufficiently considered by those who are making this kind of examinations. Too often one concludes that there is a hereditary taint when it does not really exist, except when the parents were affected at the moment of conception of the child, or, at least, for the mother, before the birth of the child. Heredity may exist with the father or mother during a part of the life, and cease in consequence of treatment or healing of the nervous trouble. It may remain latent, and leap over a generation and reappear in the second, if the root of the evil has not been extirpated. Consanguine marriages, and especially those between first cousins, have given birth to feeble-minded children, and to very nervous children predisposed to mental alienation.

WHAT REMEDIES MAY WE OPPOSE TO HEREDITY?

It goes without saying that from the moment when the least derangement of the child's nervous system is discovered, even if this is merely irritability or troubled sleep, special precautions should be taken. If the nervous state depends essentially upon the mother, the child should be confided to a good nurse, and the physician will prescribe a strict regimen for the nurse and for the child. At an age more advanced the child may have night-horrors, or be affrighted at finding itself alone or in darkness, and may manifest caprices or anger. The least emotion, ghost stories, hints of robbers, may produce irremediable evil. Masturbation, a too tender discipline, defective physical care, are further causes of injury. We should kindle affection for comrades and for animals, and repress egoism by all means. All precautions are necessary to conduct the child toward the education suitable to its nature. We must consider the fact that some children are precocious and are instructed with ease, while others are dull, slow, and interested in nothing. Both species of children must be regarded in mental pathology.

Precocious children unconsciously abuse their memory and

faculty of assimilation ; and the parents, or even the teachers, in consequence of self-love and a pride and ambition badly directed, consume these objects of their glory and too often end by precipitating their ruin. Numerous children who might be the happiness and honor of their parents and of those to whom their instruction has been intrusted, have fallen into a state of decadence or intellectual arrest, or have even become insane or demented, because too great demands have been made on their intellectual forces. Some children, good students at college, have been found to be backward and unproductive at the university, or in preparation for commercial or industrial vocations. Some students have obtained their diplomas, *maxima cum laude*, and have been arrested in the course of their liberal career, intellectually, because their personal vanity or that of their parents urged them in pursuit of honor.

Society does not comprehend, at least adequately, that man is a being who can go on unceasingly toward perfection, even to an advanced age ; that his brain does not reach its complete development even at the age of twenty-five years, and that this very precious organ ought to be respected and directed without suspension of function. We have the proof of this in the example of merchants, industrials, advocates, physicians, engineers, etc., who, not having abused their intellectual powers, make a fresh beginning at an age when many of their companions feel that there is an end of their intellectual development.

THE EDUCATION OF THE CHILD OUGHT TO BE MADE THE OBJECT
OF SPECIAL CARE.

The programs of study should be modified in primary and secondary instruction. We do not advise a return to the program of a half century ago ; the child exercised its memory, but apprehended many things which it did not comprehend. Today there are programs more logical, more in harmony with our physical and intellectual nature. We should prescribe for the child the progressive development of all the constituent parts of his being ; all parts have need of instruction and education, suitable to the end which they fulfill in nature. The limbs

are to be exercised ; the acts of respiration, circulation, and digestion are to be facilitated ; the brain is to be given intellectual and moral exercise suited to the situation of the moment. The physical exercises, care for good air and food, should go along with psychical exercise ; and this demands cultivation of the organs of sense, particularly those of sight and hearing. The visual and auditory impressions are to be placed in right relations with the cerebral power. This constitutes an instruction in intuition (*Anschauungsunterricht* of the Germans). Thus the visual and auditory impressions will be firmly fixed, and the cerebral assimilation and the provision of material for the faculty of reasoning will be promoted.

This progressive culture of the intelligence by means of the training of the principal organs of sense is to the youth a very great satisfaction, a real stimulant, since in this way he assimilates only useful things, of which he comprehends the value and necessity.

Frequently it is the teacher's want of understanding which is the cause of the indifference of pupils and of their slowness of movement. It is necessary that the master should know how to make an estimate of the intellectual strength of the pupils. If the most of the students, who are of average ability, can follow the class, it will be necessary for the others, less advanced, that the master should know how to individualize and discover means of awakening certain faculties still dormant in the child.

The program of secondary studies ought to be the continuation of those of primary instruction. Matters of little or no importance should be excluded. Why teach children things of which in coming years they will not hear a word ? We should respect the natural tendencies of youth, and we should not hinder the course of studies because they have given proofs of a preference for certain other matters, which may have given the teacher the conviction that this factor will be of no use in the career of the young person's choice, or in the one which his parents have selected for him. Too often it happens that the severity of the master leads to the grief and discouragement of the pupil, and consequently the austere and injudicious master becomes the

cause of a disappointment. The youths are rare who can carry on together the study of languages with history or mathematics, or, if they succeed, it is at cost of great exertion. This is constantly observed in the secondary studies. The masters and parents hardly pretend absolutely that the pupils excel at the same time in all branches of instruction. On the contrary, it is necessary, in the course of their studies, to try to discover their bent, in order, as far as possible, to guide them toward specialization in one kind of studies.

One may object that this is not exactly correct. I readily admit that about the age of fifteen or sixteen years this attitude cannot be rigidly held, and that even later, at the age of twenty years, changes may be produced in the taste or the choice of a career. We cannot stop at these exceptions, regarding chiefly the general truth in the education of youth.

It results from these general considerations, *a fortiori*, that all nervous persons, or those predisposed to nervousness, ought to be ceaselessly guided in their early youth, as soon as any disturbance or irregularity presents itself in the course of their studies and education. The teacher should be informed of the weak sides of those of whom he has charge. Why should there not be impressed on the teacher certain ideas in relation to the difficulties which he may encounter in his mission with children more or less troubled in their nervous systems, or predisposed to this form of disease? Their number is great, and the advantage to the teacher would be enormous and encouraging.¹

Dr. Koch, formerly director of the asylum for the insane at Zwiefalten (Württemberg), has urged many times the necessity of special instruction and education for children of arrested intelligence, and has proclaimed the necessity of creating special schools for them. In Germany, England, and the United States this idea has found many partisans, and the results obtained thus far seem to promise well for the new system. If it has been impossible to give to these undeveloped children a moral and intellectual restoration so that they can receive instruction and

¹ The reader who is interested in this question will find more details in my paper on *The Treatment of Degenerative Psychoses*.

learn a trade suitable to their intellectual ability, none the less have they succeeded in improving them to such a degree that they have been able to regain the intellectual level of other children with whom they have been in class and to move forward with these. They have awakened dormant qualities which, with many children, do not appear until a certain epoch of existence, but which appear earlier in others, who have fortunately met in their way intelligent and devoted teachers who understood how to employ special methods of instruction.

Dr. Keller, of Copenhagen, has undertaken this noble task in Denmark with genuine success, as his excellent recent report demonstrates. In England Drs. Shuttleworth and Fletcher Beach have obtained brilliant results. In the United States the works published by the National Conference of Charities and Correction prove that such rational educational enterprises for the children of the working people deserve encouragement. But in my opinion Germany bears the palm for laborious and incessant labor. During the last four years a journal has been published there for teachers, entitled *Die Kinderfehler—Zeitschrift für pädagogische Pathologie und Therapie in Haus, Schule und sozialem Leben*. This periodical is published under the learned direction of the celebrated alienist J. L. A. Koch; of Ch. Ufer, director of the schools of Reichenbach at Altenburg; of Dr. Zimmer, professor of theology at Herborn, and of J. Trüper, director of the special asylum for feeble-minded children at Sophienbade, near Jena. This journal counts among its collaborators all in the world who are interested in this kind of reform for children, and its scientific contents deserve to be known by all who are occupied with social questions.

In Belgium, although there are four asylums for backward children in this country, there is only one real specialist, Dr. Jean de Maar, of Brussels, who occupies himself seriously with this question. Personally, when I was attached once to the hospice of Guislain at Ghent, I, as well as my predecessor, Dr. B. Ingels, encountered insuperable obstacles in the effort to introduce the new modes of instruction with backward children.

In brief, it has been established that the results obtained are

remarkable, and that governments cannot give too much assistance to these schools for backward children, who, without them, are sure to descend to degeneration and mental complications.

In respect to those who remain incapable of such intellectual and moral progress, it will be necessary to segregate them for life in special establishments, as I have shown in a work published, in 1896, in the *Journal of Mental Science*, "The Need of Special Accommodations for the Degenerate." These unhappy beings are dangerous to society. I have the deep conviction that this would be one of the most hopeful social measures, and would contribute to prevent the increase of mental troubles in the degenerate, and, at the same time, would contribute very much to diminish crime.

A vice exceedingly frequent in schools, and especially in boarding schools, is masturbation. This vice is found most frequently in children poorly endowed in mental and moral faculties. But when many children are crowded together, the contagion of masturbation is much to be feared. One child instructs another in this vice, and a few bad spirits are enough to infect a whole school among the pupils who are ignorant of the terrible and dangerous consequences of masturbation. It is the imperative duty of the director of an establishment to keep his eyes open to repress this evil; and it is the duty of the parents to inform the teachers of the vices of their own children; and on both sides it is important to point out to vicious pupils the diseases to which they make themselves liable. The physicians also have a part to play in these circumstances, because the young people frequently have more confidence in their word than in the advice of parents and teachers.

It is the duty of the parents and teachers to anticipate the physician with the least possible delay. The physician can expose the injurious physical, mental, and moral consequences of masturbation, and the counsels he gives should be attested by facts. The question of masturbation is a leading argument in favor of education at home. We have heard conscientious men, some even interested in boarding schools, declare openly that they wished to see these establishments suppressed, and that it

is the duty of parents to take more careful oversight of their children. We do not doubt the sincerity of this opinion, and all the more because we often encounter in boarding schools even teachers and attendants who permit themselves to be led by unnatural instincts, and who thus contribute to the perversion of youth, and who prove unworthy of the confidence which the parents place in them.

The epoch of puberty is important in the life of boys as well as of girls, when the nervous system is predisposed to mental alienation. It is a stage of existence which ought, during a series of years, to command the close attention of parents and teachers. One should never lose out of sight the unhappy persons predisposed to insanity. There is at this stage an inclination to err by extremes. Thus we should interdict long physical fatigue, unusual walks, exhausting games; we should shun extremes of temperature, great heat or great cold, especially with girls, with whom excess of temperature may influence the menstrual flow, by diminishing, augmenting, or even suppressing it. The study hours will be strictly limited for those in peril. The sleep will be watched. Inadequate sleep is an insufficient restorer of body and mind, and insomnia is often a warning, a forerunner, of some psychical injury. This danger is greater for the girl than for the boy, who is often not affected at this transitional period; he becomes more sensitive when he reaches full development, that is, at about the twenty-ninth year. The girl, on the contrary, is generally considered to be completely developed at seventeen or eighteen years. It follows that for young people of both sexes between seventeen and twenty-nine years of age the need of watchfulness becomes more urgent, because about this age the phenomena are more frequently manifested. But it is at this epoch that young people attack the most difficult passage of life, that they really begin to live, that they find themselves facing the choice of a calling. It is also at this epoch that the affections are enkindled, and that most persons are married. How many young people at this age are prepared to contract marriage, which brings with it the idea of power to provide the material means of living? It is at this period that nervous persons

experience the results of internal and external excitement, and that hysteria appears in the girl. The young people now are subject to the consequences of the nature of the education which they have received; and if they are nervous or predisposed to mental weakness, the moment becomes critical. The parents should guide them by their counsels and especially direct them to a career in harmony with their psychical constitution: a very difficult matter, since it is necessary to be constantly watchful, and to prepare the young persons who are thus predisposed so that they can overcome the threatened evil.

The history of heredity conducts us to *alcoholism*, and these two should be considered the principal causes of degeneration. Authors are unanimously agreed that there is no way of controlling alcoholism without total abstinence from alcoholic liquors. Alcoholic victims are innumerable. We encounter them in all classes of society, as well in the asylum as in the privileged classes. Alcoholism is not merely dangerous in relation to mental diseases, but it is a public evil, because it affects different functions of the human being. France, as well as Belgium, holds the record in this matter. The only good use of alcohol is as an anæsthetic to diminish the sensation of fatigue. It also produces a cerebral excitement which *momentarily* antagonizes moral pain, which dissipates annoyances by inducing an artificial quiet, and this is desired with avidity by those who do not know its consequences.

The popular belief that alcohol imparts energy is a gross error. The proof has been given by many experiments during recent years. Alcohol gives strength to no one. Workmen who believe that the use of water enfeebles and that alcohol sustains them for labor give a wrong interpretation to facts. It is true that, if we stop the use of alcohol as a habitual stimulant, we induce feebleness; but the same thing occurs with morphine takers, with whom deprivation of their poison plunges them into a pitiable state. That which we have affirmed of spirits is true of wine and of all other drinks which contain alcohol. The civilization which developed inside of the Græco-Roman world, that of

the Arabs, does not know alcohol and its results, because its legislator and prophet, Mahomet, forbade the use of wine. Alcohol, as Gladstone has said, makes in our day worse ravages than the three historic plagues—famine, pestilence, and war. It decimates beyond the pestilence and famine; it kills more than war; and it does worse than slay—it dishonors. Famine has become rare. Medicine has vanquished the plague. War is an intermittent evil. But alcoholism is a continual and degrading evil. Some nations release themselves from it by energetic measures, but there is need of a similar energy and courage in other nations to annihilate the greatest enemy of the world. To conquer alcoholism would be to reduce the hereditary causes of nervous and mental disorders to a minimum; and to diminish the number of asylums for insanity, crime, vagabondage, and pauperism; and also, consequently, the orphanages, hospitals, and hospices for the aged. This would be a notable contribution to the physical and moral welfare of the people, and to the happiness of numberless families.

Professor Delman, of Rome, has made a very interesting study of *hereditary inebriety*. One woman, named Ada Jaske, born in 1740, deceased at the beginning of this century, was an old drunkard, a thief, and a vagabond. She left a progeny of 834 persons, of whom 709 have been studied in their history. Of this number there have been 106 illegitimate children, 142 mendicants, 64 sustained by charity; 161 women gave themselves to prostitution; 76 members of this family were criminals, and among them seven assassins. In seventy-five years this single family, according to official estimates, has cost for maintenance, expenses of imprisonment, damage, and interest a sum of five million marks!

This statement deserves special notice; it confirms the importance of improving social education. While many governments and other institutions busy themselves with trifles of instruction, and also impose intolerable burdens on teachers who desire progress, they leave untouched the great questions to which we have called attention.

Many physicians to the insane, and they among the most celebrated, have abandoned the prescription of wines and spirits. Other practitioners have ridiculed the assertion that wines are tonics, and declare that they are more hurtful than helpful. Dr. Koch, who has written splendid and immortal works on degeneracy and prophylaxy of mental diseases, insists strongly on the uselessness of wine in therapeutics. Dr. Wearanden and Dr. Toulouse, celebrated French alienists, take the same view. Hereditary neuropaths especially manifest very often inability to endure alcoholic drinks. And since neuropaths are quite numerous, and among them many are predisposed to insanity, it is indispensable that they should abstain from every drink of this nature.

It is important to note here the objection one may make to abstinence from alcoholic liquors for neuropaths. Many of the predisposed remain apparently insensible to alcohol, while in reality this poison unconsciously inflicts upon them ravages which, at a certain stage of the malady, they are powerless to control. One should show himself much more severe in the recommendation of total abstinence when he deals with persons who manifest neuropathic symptoms. It should not be forgotten that generations issued from neuropaths will be more predisposed to insanity if their ancestors have used alcoholic drinks too freely.

At the end of the last century medicine, assuming a scientific character, began to undertake the study of alcoholism. Legions of authors have occupied themselves with this problem, and all without exception agree in recognizing the danger. It is impossible to cite the names of all in that illustrious company of workers and fighters who see in inebriety a menace against the very existence of the rebellious nations.

Dr. Debone, professor of the medical faculty at Paris, has arranged a comparative table of the consumption of alcoholic drinks. He mentions the quantity of such drinks for every 100 inhabitants :

France	-	-	-	14	liters
Belgium	-	-	-	10.50	"
Germany	-	-	-	10.50	"
Great Britain	-	-	-	9.29	"
Switzerland	-	-	-	8.79	"
Italy	-	-	-	6.60	"
Holland	-	-	-	6.29	"
United States	-	-	-	6.10	"
Sweden	-	-	-	4.90	"
Norway	-	-	-	3.00	"
Canada	-	-	-	2.00	"

The same author cites an aspect more serious for France and Belgium. While in many other countries the consumption of alcohol is diminishing, in these countries it follows a rising scale. Thus, while in France in 1830 the rate was 1.1 liters to 100 inhabitants, in 1898 it was 4.54. In Belgium in 1839 it was 3.6 liters, and in 1894 it was 4.7.

In Holland	{ 1876	6.
	{ 1891	4.4
Great Britain	{ 1852	2.8
	{ 1894	2.2
Italy	{ 1880	.85
	{ 1891	.35
Germany	{ 1837	8.2
	{ 1894	4.4
Switzerland	{ 1878	5.2
	{ 1894	2.9
United States	{ 1860	5.75
	{ 1893	2.85

The number of places of sale in France in 1830 was 281,000; in 1897 it was 500,000.

The injury done by alcohol, in addition to causing insanity and degeneration, is proved not only by the medical profession, but also by the insurance companies. It is important to notice these results. M. Jaquet, of Bâle, in a work on the English insurance companies, declares that three companies for insurance against loss of work by reason of sickness have had, between 1884 and 1889, an average of twenty-six weeks of sickness to each individual; while the treasury of the Sons of Temperance, a society which admits only abstainers, has had during the same period only seven weeks of sickness to each individual; an

enormous difference if we consider that the first three companies are not recruited among the intemperate. These happy differences are also found in certain English companies which make a distinction between the temperance section and the general section; the premium is 28 per cent. lower for the abstainers than for the others. These figures have their value because a good part of the results may be involved to prove that alcohol is a cause of degeneration.

In respect to the proportion of insanity caused by alcohol, one cannot appeal to the statistics of Belgium, which in general do not merit much confidence. French tables mention a proportion of 38 per cent. with men and of 12 per cent. with women. It is evident that this is under the truth, since many cases of alcoholism are not officially mentioned. In fact, there are many inebriates who manifest mental disorders without on that account being shut up in asylums; and there are many insane inebriates who, under the influence of alcohol, have become licentious, quarrelsome, ill-tempered evil-doers, but whose troubles are not judged to be important enough to make confinement necessary. Not all these insane inebriates figure in statistics; but we encounter many of them in prisons, workhouses, etc.

Many of these victims might have escaped this destiny by means of a wholesome mode of living, if alcohol had not diminished their power of resistance in their nervous system. If alcohol has not induced in them insanity, there is no doubt that it has subjected the drunkards to a mental defect which they will transmit to their posterity in the form of imbecility, idiocy, moral insanity, hysteria, epilepsy, future inebriety, criminality, etc. It is sufficient to say that the struggle against inebriety is the most certain prophylactic measure, not only against different kinds of mental disease, but also against various other maladies of the body, against crime, vagabondage, mendicity, etc. The prisons swarm with inebriates, as the hospitals and workhouses abound with vagabonds and mendicants. The orphanages count numerous victims of the inebriety of parents, as well as the asylums for the aged. The French attribute a part of the diminution of births to alcoholism, and it would not be difficult to prove the exactness

of their assertions. Dr. Debone, in his chemical lecture on alcoholism, recalled these good words of Plutarch : " Those who wish to approach woman to beget ought to do it before drinking wine, or at least after very moderate use ; because those who are begotten of drunken parents ordinarily become drunkards, as Diogenes once said to a disorderly and debauched young man : " Young friend, thy father begot thee in his drunkenness."

Observations made in Belgium and in France contrast in a remarkable way with the statistics where alcoholism is decreasing. In Sweden, from 1830 to 1834, the annual consumption of alcohol being about 23 liters to a person, there were 59 homicides and 2,281 thefts. From 1875 to 1878, the consumption being reduced to 5.5 liters, there were 18 homicides and 1,871 thefts. In Norway in 1814 there were consumed 5 liters to the person ; and there were 294 crimes to 100,000 inhabitants ; in 1876, the consumption being reduced to 2 liters, there were only 180 crimes. Sweden and Norway, therefore, prove that the reduction of alcoholism reduces crime. Mental alienation and other maladies and vices due to alcohol have also diminished. We regret that we cannot state the figures of this decrease. Inheritance of evils caused by alcohol has not been merely discussed by physicians. Before them the moralists saw in the ancestors merely a bad example. Today physiological heredity is admitted without doubt. Professor Debone proclaims it aloud. Alcoholism destroys the race in two ways : by augmenting mortality or by producing degenerates. The conviction is supported by indisputable figures cited for countries where increase of population is very high. Germany doubles its population in 91 years ; Sweden in 89 years ; Denmark in 73 years ; Austria in 67 years ; Norway in 51 years ; while France would require 334 years.

What remedies may be proposed for this frightful evil? Debone says they are of two kinds : counsels given individually to those who are willing to hear, and coercive means applicable to all.

INDIVIDUAL COUNSELS.

One does not know how to approve too strongly the wisdom of those who are content to drink pure water. But if one does

not possess this virtue, he can drink hygienic drinks—boiled milk, tea, coffee. Whatever is said, it is not possible to determine the quantity of alcohol which one can drink with impunity, since we must take account of individual susceptibility. That which seems harmless for one is an abuse in another. It is difficult to say when the quantity is innocent, for a slight excess which may not be noticed, even if it does not affect the brain, may expose other parts of the body to serious injuries. Already many physicians drink water, and it is an established fact that in the banquets of physicians the consumption of wine is half that at other banquets. Many physicians have reduced the quantity of alcohol and wine in their prescriptions, and they do not so frequently recommend wine and beer to nursing women.

Alcoholism may be considered one of the capital causes of mental disorders and human degeneracy. It is against this evil that all should labor with united forces and by all means which tend to annihilate it.

Also the societies for preventing the abuse of alcoholic drinks have great reason to be congratulated. In Holland Dr. Buysch, inspector of asylums for the insane, and in Belgium Dr. Frank, have become valiant champions of the noble cause, and have made appeal to woman and have taught her to comprehend the grand part she can take in social reform by contributing to the contest against alcoholism.

Woman is in a position to fulfill the rôle of a protecting angel, capable of covering with her wings those who are unfortunate and of showing them the lofty way of salvation.

GENERAL MEASURES.

Alcoholism being a public danger, it is necessary to use in combating it public measures, that is, laws and reforms which assist in the struggle. It has been proposed to raise to the highest point the duties on alcohol, to increase the price of licences to wine merchants, to limit the number of drinking places, and to forbid the sale of unwholesome drinks. Thus far none of these reforms has succeeded. Candidates as well as electors have an interest in maintaining present conditions. Dr.

Legrain has demonstrated by statistics that in France there are about four millions of inhabitants who derive some profit from the trade in alcoholic drinks. These millions of alcohol dealers, says Dr. Debone, have an admirable understanding with the other millions of alcohol drinkers whose deepest desire is to increase their malady rather than to cure it.

In America, England, Denmark, and Switzerland numerous women of generous hearts have been found to enter the conflict. It is indispensable that the other civilized countries should follow the beautiful example. Woman is able to act as mother, as sister, as friend. In the home which she exalts by order and delicacy she will provide a center of attraction for her husband, her children, her friends. She will be trusted by the friends of the family, and especially by those who are characterized by an orderly life. She will put forth every endeavor to persuade the members of her family and her acquaintances who abuse or are tempted to abuse alcoholic drinks, and, in case of despair of success, will reject those of them to whom she has no special obligation.

Woman will not only by her social position be able to exercise a great influence on her family, but even when heredity has struck the children she may be able, by careful education, to induce total abstinence from alcoholic drinks, to diminish the tendency to degeneration, and to ameliorate the mental and moral life of those who are dear to her. The moment has not come for a radical law against alcoholism. It is necessary to prepare the people by popular writing and conferences. It is necessary to reach the public before knocking at the door of the legislature. The contest with alcoholism should form a part of political programs, for all parties will accept this article when the multitude has once comprehended the permanent danger and destructive nature of this plague. It is necessary that the physicians and public men should make known their opinions far and wide, that there be unanimity among them, and that they affirm the urgent need of measures which tend to restrict the consumption of alcoholic drinks, and to restrict the use of alcoholic drinks to those which are entirely pure.

History teaches us that it is not unreasonable to seek conquest over a vice by suggestions, and condemnation to a legal penalty is one of the most powerful means. The law should authorize the forfeiture of the rights of a father or mother who is an inebriate; this would be a social protective measure of incontestable value, and one which would cause many husbands and wives to reflect.

Dr. Jouffroy divides the alcoholics into several categories: The category of simple drinkers who do not manifest any mental trouble, or any grave visceral lesion. Being strong, they might be helped by a method which would establish an active habit, in a house of abstinence and labor. Among these patients we should find most of the proselytes who, once healed, would go out to speak a good word to others. The second category includes alcoholics affected by mental troubles, and who suffer from affections of the stomach, liver, or kidneys. Dr. Jouffroy proposes to confine the former in asylums of abstinence, and the others in hospitals of abstinence. The celebrated professor of the faculty of medicine at Paris does not recommend sending all the insane alcoholics to a special asylum; but he proposes to send the incurable, the general paralytics, and demented cases into asylums for the insane in order not to crowd the special inebriate houses.

Dr. Sérieux proposes to collect in a single establishment all alcoholics by classes, according to their physical and mental state, even taking account of their social rank and positions.

Dr. Toulouse, in his excellent book, *The Causes of Insanity*, limits himself to recommending, as conditions of admission to a special institution, the absence of mental disorders or their cessation. This measure, says the author, appears at first sight strange, and yet, if one reflects that the purpose of those houses is essentially to correct habitual alcoholics, it is important to undertake this work under the best possible conditions. It is for this reason that most authors agree on the principle that the disturbances provoked by alcohol are curable. When a person is attacked by a subacute alcoholic delirium, he is sequestered. He is subjected at the asylum for the insane to a régime of

abstinence, which is not so rigorous as it will be in an asylum of abstinence, but which is sufficient to permit him to become sound in mind, if this termination of the malady, in a certain cerebral condition, is possible. Observe that so long as he is delirious he usually remains in confinement, where it is difficult to procure alcoholic liquors, at least in quantity to bring on his disorder. When he is cured comes the moment to send him to a special asylum, where he will be an abstainer, and where he will learn to form habits which will assure against future falls.

The asylum for abstinents, says Dr. Magnan, ought to be a field of suggestion. The physician and his assistants, the employés and nurses, ought to give the example and should drink water alone. It is important that there should be no discordant note, no jesting from any source, to interfere with the action of treatment. The reading of papers, conversation, conferences, all ought to be employed to strike the attention of the sick and to reassure their good resolutions. And when they go out, the treatment is only begun, not completed. It belongs then to another institution, to boards of relief, to help and watch over them.

Awaiting further legislative measures, the temperance societies are doing vast good, and in several countries of Europe their number and influence increase from day to day, and their crusades are by no means near the end. It is necessary to arouse from indifference members of the higher social classes. The inferior classes will not be long in following them.

We merely remind the reader of the abuses of morphine and other drugs which contribute to the increase of insanity. The remedy here is easily found. It would be sufficient to impose a fine on all druggists who dispense such medicines without the prescription of a physician.¹

RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS.

Religious education should be conducted with moderation,

¹ In America the suppression of patent medicines, cigarettes, etc., containing cocaine, opium, alcohol, etc., should be made part of this movement to prevent insanity.—C. R. H.

especially with young children, boys as well as girls. Too frequently certain children, at a moment when the intelligence and judgment are still far from maturity of mental powers, are surfeited with devotional exercises, and their faculties are held to a given point, to the neglect of instruction in other duties to which all men are called. In a general manner education ought to fit for a life in the different directions which people must follow here below in order to occupy with dignity their places in society. Education insufficient for these purposes renders a man incomplete and unhappy and exposed to the inconveniences which occur from imperfection in the education of the senses. Many times the obstacles arising from education have disturbed the nervous system of men, and the asylums for the insane inclose many such victims. Religion should be taught practically and should not be introspective. Many persons trouble their brains with ideas they cannot follow; they feel disturbed and they often disturb others trying to find solutions which cannot be discovered.

CHOICE OF A CAREER.

Young men gradually arrive at an age which requires a certain preoccupation, the choice of a career, of a profession. Girls generally manifest this preoccupation in a less degree. This preoccupation may increase when the parents do not give care to the matter and do not help the children in making a choice. Often by force of circumstances a happy situation of the parents takes away the difficulty. But in another situation, what can be done? Even then the selection is easy if the young man is well endowed physically and mentally; but if any hereditary or acquired defect exists, the choice becomes more difficult, and demands not only all the attention of relatives and educators, but also of the person interested. Any profession which involves great responsibilities ought to be discarded. The future is to be considered and the obstacles which will be met. Very frequently one has seen men succumb who had not a nervous system vigorous enough to cope with the difficulties of the profession. A really nervous man ought to make choice of a

position which permits him every day several hours of repose from nervous fatigue.

MARRIAGE.

Marriage is another important point in the question of preventing insanity. How many young people, consulting merely their own feelings, permit themselves to glide into a union without dreaming of the consequences! They consult neither their parents, family, nor physician! And if their views are asked, often it is too late; the counsels are not heeded; and views opposed to their own are received with bad grace.

It would be an error to believe that one must dissuade from marriage everyone who counts an insane person in the family. We should affirm that there is serious reason for consideration, and it is important in such circumstances that an intelligent physician, accustomed to make psychical examinations, should be informed of the case and express his personal opinion. It too often happens that nervous persons incline to select those who have the same temperament, and that they prefer members of their own family to strangers, whom they do not dare to approach. The danger increases when cousins have parents who have become insane.

A member of a neuropathic family ought to enjoy good health, and should marry a person in strong health, and one whose family has given no reason to suspect any trace of mental disturbance or degeneration. A neuropathic girl should not marry any man who has not a good position and resources sufficient to exclude from the future all reasons for anxiety which might prejudice the material life. The obligation of duty to care for material interests of existence depresses a man who could easily have endured the struggle for life if he could have lived continually in normal circumstances. In addition to all the moral trouble and all the emotions so frequent with married people who are nervous, it is necessary to add another cause of debilitation with women—that is, the too rapid succession of births, which induces physical and mental weakness, and consequently a strong tendency to mental alienation. This is not

only true with those predisposed to insanity, but also with women entirely free from the taint, who from too frequent confinements pay their tribute to insanity.

Certain rather radical spirits wish to legislate on questions of marriage, and to prevent it in the case of those who manifest any hereditary trace. It is certain that with certain persons one could predict the future heredity; but, in considering this vital question, would it be necessary to tarnish the entire family? The solution of this problem is never possible, since we can never fix precisely the heredity of ascendants or the transmission to descendants. With neuropathic parents there may be children who cannot in advance be pronounced tainted, because special precautions have been taken with the physical and psychical education, or there may be among them one or two exceptions where heredity has not been overcome. It should be said decidedly that it is impossible to prove that the procreation of neuropathic, hysterical, and epileptic persons, etc., will be necessarily a procreation of beings who will become insane.

Families careful for their children and desirous of preventing all unhappiness in future generations have at their disposition the physician, who, being consulted on the subject, is able to offer good guarantees after a searching examination. The modern conception of individual liberty never will permit the state to interpose, if either of the persons proposing marriage frankly declares before marriage that certain serious defects have existed in the family. If, on the contrary, a secret is guarded before marriage, the situation changes, and in this case the law ought to authorize divorce for the reason of deception in the contract of marriage. Such unions have naturally as a consequence the production of beings more or less incapable of providing for the maintenance of their existence, of beings sick or degenerate, who remain a charge upon their parents or who must be entrusted to public charity. Such marriages must lead to pauperism. It is not admissible that one of the married pair inflict on the other moral suffering and material sacrifices without being able to appeal to legal measures which impose on the affianced the duty of making reciprocal declarations, when they know

the existence of hereditary or acquired defects, and that without the pain of divorce which the deceived persons might demand. Dr. Toulouse adds that it would be necessary to protect this declaration against indiscreet use by formally interdicting any publication of it. Dr. Toulouse follows this suggestion with other reflections which arise naturally when one seeks means of preventing pathological surprises in marriage. Why not treat marriage somewhat like a contract analogous to that made by a life-insurance company? Companies of this kind impose on their clients a visit from their physicians, who are thus bound by the professional confidence. Marriage also is a contract. Why should not the parties submit themselves to the same obligation? The fear of a medical visit would break off many a negotiation which would issue in a regrettable union.

Sentiments of generosity, certainly hurtful to the welfare of the species, have introduced into the law of divorce, at least in France and Belgium, an article indicating that insanity may not be invoked as a cause of final separation. We should render homage to the good intentions of the legislator who has desired to protect the unfortunate. And yet, at the higher point of view of social defense, and of the prosperity of the nation, this sentiment is certainly not dangerous; but, without desiring that we should entirely reject this philanthropic measure, it might be possible to demand that alcoholics, hardened drunkards who had been condemned for drunkenness or shut up in asylums for the insane several times, should be deprived of their marital right in some degree, and power given to the consort to be freed. The legacy of alcoholism is frightful: candidates for insanity, hysteria, epilepsy, idiocy, criminality, etc., etc.

Education, which includes the environment, would form in this study a very important chapter, if time and space permitted expansion. From cradle to tomb man is subject without cessation to the influence of his surroundings, which increase or diminish his happiness according to the character of the influence and his physical and mental constitution. Even supposing that there is no hereditary taint, no physical poisoning which could induce a certain degree of degeneration, the

influence of the environment may contribute to modify sensibly the nervous system, and to disturb the brain. To cite only one example of the highest order: there are nations which degenerate because they are subject to the influence of a journalism which looks more to personal interest, or to the interest of a party, than to the general interest, that of the entire community.

The external world is full of enemies who tend without ceasing to break down our psychical and moral faculties, as there are foes hidden in our own bodies. The nervous system of man is accessible to a series of injurious causes, and if one part is able to resist with some ease, the other is smitten, and disease ensues. Man must consider the harmful causes that he may prepare himself for the struggle for existence, that he may learn to vanquish the unhappy forces which tend unceasingly to bring him to ruin. We have cited some striking examples when we mentioned alcoholism, undue intellectual labor of children, excessive religious instruction, etc. These exogenous causes may be complicated with endogenous causes which we can name only in a general way; their full description would require a too great extension of this paper. It must suffice to mention the influence of a series of somatic maladies upon the psychical state.

Among the persons who offer the greatest access to mental maladies it is necessary to mention, in the first place, those whose nervous system suffers from birth or from the time of a sickness; and among the nervous troubles which show the greatest predisposition we include neurasthenia, epilepsy, hysteria, chorea, and the tendency to suicide. To this list we must add the people who show constitutional debility or any disease which ends in an exhaustion of physical and nervous force—as tuberculosis, cancer, chloro-anæmia, rachitis, and scurvy. A second category of the predisposed is met in persons whose brain remains incompletely developed, as in the morally insane, imbeciles, idiots, and their offspring. A special treatment is required for each disease, as well for physical as for intellectual and moral education, to provide resistance power against all which may endanger the nervous system. The struggle must be perpetual. For the

elimination of causes is the only prophylactic measure. Mental maladies are continually increasing with the advance of civilization, because this contributes much to the debilitation of the nervous system.

Unhappily it is not possible to the families of the predisposed and to educators to react with sufficient intensity against all the debilitating causes. We have seen in the course of this paper that a good part of the victory must belong to government; it is to those who are responsible for the making of laws for the solution of social questions that we look for the amelioration and happiness of the people. The egoistic interests of political parties ought to give place to social interests, and without wise and devoted protectors governments will continue to expend millions without profit to the people.

Governments neglect too much the light of the arts and, above all, of those who understand the moral hygiene of the masses. Let them abandon their egoistic aims; let them cease to cling to mere personal views; let them go to learn of those who understand the unhappy situation of millions of men who, from not having met in their way benefactors and truly honest guides, finish by falling into physical and moral misery, ending in insanity.

Here we terminate our work. We did not start out to treat the problem of prophylaxy of insanity in a complete manner. We have attacked it only on one side, the social side. Even in this aspect we might mention various gaps, but we are restricted by the length of our article. Yet the reader can see that we have touched the more important points of a social view which ought to be familiar to all who have at heart the progress of society. Perhaps some day each one of these aspects may be studied in this JOURNAL in more ample extension. Society would gain much by giving more active attention to these questions, whose solution would contribute to the amelioration of the human species and to its preservation from many miseries. Prevention is better than cure, and if there should ever come a day for the extinction of the greater part of the causes which engender mental disease and degeneration, the medical alienist would

play an important part. The causes can never be radically suppressed; they are too numerous. The nineteenth century has certainly multiplied and aggravated them. May the twentieth century profit by the miseries of this which will soon come to an end.

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